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Mr. Herbert Spencer and the Land Restoration...

London [England]

1894

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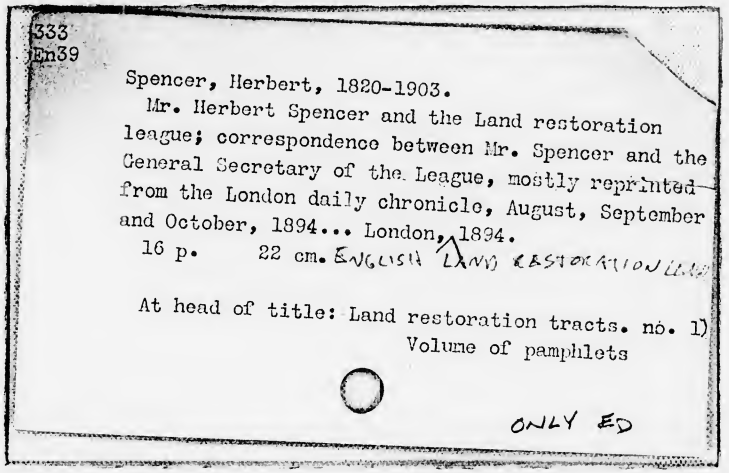

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Spencer, Herbert, 1820-1903.
Mr. Herbert Spencer and the Land restoration league; correspondence between Mr. Spencer and the General Secretary of the League, mostly reprinted from the London daily chronicle, August, September and October, 1894... London, 1894.
16 p. 22 cm. ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAG

At head of title: Land restoration tracts. no. 1)
Volume of pamphlets

ONLY ED

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 9:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 4-16-98 INITIALS: RTA

TRACKING # : 32741

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No. 3

Land Restoration Tracts. No. 1.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER

AND THE

LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE.

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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. SPENCER AND THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE LEAGUE, MOSTLY REPRINTED FROM THE LONDON *DAILY CHRONICLE*, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, AND OCTOBER, 1894.

ONE PENNY.

LONDON:
OFFICES OF THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE,
8 DUKE STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

December, 1894.

English Land Restoration League.

OBJECT : The Abolition of Landlordism.

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MR. HERBERT SPENCER

AND THE

Land Restoration League.

I.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 20th*, 1894.

MR. M. D. O'BRIEN, the author of several anti-Socialist works, who is now engaged lecturing in rural places in opposition to the propaganda of the Red Van of the English Land Restoration League, recently sent to Mr. Herbert Spencer a leaflet circulated by the agents of the League, purporting to represent that eminent philosopher's views on the subject of land nationalisation. Mr. Spencer writes in reply to Mr. O'Brien (who questioned the accuracy of the leaflet) as follows :—

"DEAR SIR,—The leaflet which you have sent me, issued by the English Land Restoration League, doubly falsifies the opinions I have expressed on the land question. At the same time that I contended that there should be a resumption of direct landownership by the community at large, I held that this resumption could only take place after compensation had been made to existing landowners. I said that most of our present landowners are men who have either mediately or immediately—either by their own acts or by the acts of their ancestors—given for their estates equivalents of honestly-earned wealth, believing that they were investing their savings in a legitimate manner. To justly estimate and liquidate the claims of such is one of the most intricate problems society will one day have to solve. ("Social Statics," original edition, Chapter IX., Section 9). This passage is deliberately suppressed. The garbled quotation entirely falsifies the statement of my opinion. There is a further deliberate falsification. The opinion quoted, or rather misquoted, is tacitly represented as my present opinion. It is implied that I, at present, advocate resumption of direct ownership of the land by the community, whereas it is perfectly well known by those who have issued this leaflet that I have, in a considerable measure, changed my opinion. I originally thought that, after due compensation had been made to existing landowners, the community would benefit by taking the land into its own hands; whereas I have since then concluded that the transaction would be a losing one for the community. If due compensation were made, there would not be a balance of gain but a balance of loss. Hence I have argued that it would be better that the existing system should continue. I shall be glad if you will, whenever you have the opportunity, rectify these grave misrepresentations made in the leaflet you have sent me.

I am, faithfully yours,
HERBERT SPENCER.

II.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 21st.*

SIR,—I can quite understand that Mr. M. D. O'Brien and the Liberty and Property Defence League do not like to be confronted with the crushing arguments against private property in land put forth by Mr. Herbert Spencer in his "Socia Statics." It appears, from the somewhat angry letter from him, which you publish this morning, that Mr. Spencer himself does not greatly care to be reminded of them. But these are hardly sufficient reasons for bringing against the English Land Restoration League an unfounded charge of "deliberate" (and "double") "falsification."

I. Mr. Spencer first charges the League with "deliberately suppressing" an essential part of his argument, and thus by "garbled quotation entirely falsifying the statement of his opinion." The offending leaflet is No. 7 of our series :—'The Right to the Use of the Earth." It was drawn up more than ten years ago by the late J. L. Joynes, whose name is appended to it. No one who knew Mr. Joynes would lightly charge him with literary dishonesty, nor does an examination of the leaflet bear out any such charge as that which Mr. Spencer makes. The leaflet does not profess to give the whole even of Mr. Spencer's famous chapter under the same title, but is a brief summary of the whole argument, with running commentary and many quotations. I have to-day—not for the first time—compared our leaflet with the authority to which Mr. Spencer refers us—"Social Statics," original edition (1851), Chapter IX.—and I assert that the whole argument is fairly summarised, that the quotations are accurately made and carefully distinguished from the comments, and that the *whole* of Mr. Spencer's own "brief review of the argument" (Sec. 10) is given verbatim. I shall be glad to send a copy of the leaflet to anyone who wishes to make the verification for himself.

But Mr. Spencer says, nevertheless, that we have "suppressed" his contention that land-resumption "could only take place after compensation had been made to existing landowners." Mr. Spencer, in summarising his own argument (Section 10), actually does not mention this, which he now professes to regard as an essential part of it. He only says :—

However difficult it may be to embody that theory (viz., of the co-heirship of all men to the soil) in fact, equity sternly commands it to be done.

Mr. Joynes, though evidently taking the same view as Mr. Spencer did in his summing up, does briefly refer to the compensation paragraph :—

He admits that great difficulties must attend the resumption by mankind at large of their rights to the soil. He does not advocate the leaving of the present holders, who can neither toil nor spin, to starve.

The fact is, Mr. Spencer's own quotation from his own book is "garbled." Let me help him to a fuller statement of his own views :

But, unfortunately, most of our present landowners are men who have, either mediately or immediately—either by their own acts or by the acts of their ancestors—given for their estates equivalents of honestly-earned wealth, believing that they were investing their savings in a legitimate manner. To justly estimate and liquidate the claims of such is one of the most intricate problems society will one day have to solve. *But with this perplexity and our extrication from it abstract morality has no concern.* Men having got themselves into the dilemma by disobedience to the law must get out of it as well as they can, and with as little injury to the landed class as may be.

Meanwhile, we shall do well to recollect that there are others besides the landed class to be considered. In our tender regard for the vested interests of the few, let us remember that the rights of the many are in abeyance; and must remain so as long as the earth is monopolised by individuals. Let us remember, too, that the injustice thus inflicted on the mass of mankind is an injustice of the

gravest nature. . . . To deprive others of their rights to the use of the earth is to commit a crime inferior only in wickedness to the crime of taking away their lives or personal liberties.

Now, it was precisely with the "abstract morality" of land nationalisation from the Individualist point of view, as expounded by its eloquent apostle, and not with methods, that our leaflet had to do, and consequently the argument had, on Mr. Spencer's own showing, "no concern" with the perplexities of his compensation scheme. The chief perplexity about it is, I venture to remark, the extreme difficulty, not to say the utter impossibility, of squaring it with the rest of his argument. He shows that "equity does not permit private property in land" (sec. 2); he denies that the existing titles to land are valid, and asserts that they are the results of violence, fraud, force, and cunning; while "the right of mankind at large to the earth's surface is still valid; all deeds, customs, and laws notwithstanding" (sec. 3); that not only is landlordism indefensible, but "it is impossible to discover any mode in which land *can* become private property" (sec. 4); he brushes aside the claim to ownership of land based upon cultivation and improvement (sec. 4), or even upon a general agreement to divide it up (sec. 5); he regards the private monopoly of land as a "crime" only inferior to homicide (sec. 9); and yet—he proposes to *compensate* those who have committed this crime in the past for not committing it in the future. And he has expressly ruled out, in an argument at once eloquent and convincing, the plea that lapse of time and frequency of transfer have cured the original defect in the titles of the first land thieves (sec. 3). We may well ask with him, "At what rate per annum do invalid claims become valid" enough to entitle the claimants to compensation?

I do not find Mr. Spencer complaining that our leaflet does not quote in full the passages in which he pours scorn upon all the arguments upon which the claim for compensation is usually based. But he does complain that we do not quote in full a passage which is inconsistent with the rest of his argument, and, on his own confession, had nothing to do with it.

II. We are well aware that Mr. Spencer has in letters to the *St. James's Gazette* and to the *Times*, and in other later writings, apologised for, modified, or recanted his earlier arguments. But we have never pretended that our leaflet represents Mr. Spencer's present views. It has never professed to be other than a summary of a chapter from "Social Statics." The arguments are, and have been for over forty years, public property; we believe them to be valid; we do not think that either Mr. Spencer or anyone else has ever *answered* them. Unfortunately for Mr. Spencer's present position, and for his friends in the Liberty and Property Defence League—"Sir John and his Grace"—with whom he now agrees that "it would be better that the existing system" with all its inequities "should continue," many thousands have been convinced by his arguments who cannot follow him in his repudiation of them. They still believe, as he once did, that "either men *have* a right to make the soil private property or they *have not.* . . . If they *have* such a right, then there is truth in that tenet of the ultra-Tory school"—represented by the Liberty and Property Defence League—"that the landowners are the only legitimate rulers of a country; that the people at large remain in it only by the landowners' permission, and ought, consequently, to submit to the landowners' rule, and respect whatever institutions the landowners set up. *There is no escape from these inferences.*"

I am, sir, yours faithfully,

FREDK. VERINDER.

Offices of the English Land Restoration League,
8, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C.
August 20th.

III.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 24th.*

SIR,—The character of the leaflet issued by the English Land Restoration League may be very simply tested.

Suppose that after stating the arguments used by me in 1850 to show that individual appropriation of land is not equitable, there had been quoted the passage in which I said that since the present landowners are neither the original misappropriators nor their descendants, but are in nearly all cases, descendants of those who gave for their land honestly-acquired money, compensation must be paid to them before resumption of the land by the community And suppose that the leaflet had further stated that though in 1850 I had assumed that, after making such compensation, there would be a balance of benefit to the community, I had in the intervening forty odd years come to the conclusion that the transaction, equitably carried out, would entail more loss than gain, and that therefore it would be better that the present arrangement should continue.

Would it in that case have answered the purpose of the League to distribute the leaflet among the peasantry as they have been doing? The inevitable answer is—No; and the implication is obvious.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

HERBERT SPENCER.

Cliftonville, Margate, *August 23rd.*

IV.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 25th.*

SIR,—Instead of replying to my letter, Mr. Spencer restates, by "implication," the charges against the English Land Restoration League, which he made in good set terms in the letter to Mr. O'Brien published in your columns on Monday last.

I am sure that your readers, and I hope and believe that (on consideration) Mr. Spencer himself, will see that our suggested answer to his question is no more "inevitable" than the implication which he evolves from it is "obvious."

The leaflet to which Mr. Spencer objects so strenuously was prepared and published before I became secretary, or was even a member, of the League. I understand that it assumed its present form chiefly because the Executive of that day were anxious to bring a fair summary of the argument in Chapter IX. of "Social Statics" within the compass of a short and easily-read leaflet.

Mr. Spencer, on the contrary, suggests that the leaflet does not represent his views fairly and fully, and that, if it did, it would not have answered the purpose of the League to have published it at all.

The fact is that the whole of Chapter IX. of the original edition of "Social Statics," even with the addition suggested by Mr. Spencer as being necessary to bring it down to date, would form an immensely *stronger* argument in support of the League's position than even the leaflet which we have hitherto been using, and one which we should have no hesitation whatever in placing in the hands either of the "peasantry" or of the artisans in the towns.

For, if we are to publish Mr. Spencer's views verbatim we shall have to print in full not only his plea for compensation, but also his rehearsal of the reasons which make compensation not only unnecessary but immoral. We shall not only have to make him say, as he does in his letter to-day—

That since the present landlords are neither the original misappropriators nor their descendants, but are, in nearly all cases, descendants of those who gave for their land honestly-acquired money, compensation must be made to them before resumption of the land by the community;

but we shall also have to ask with him ("Social Statics," IX., 3)—

Does sale or bequest generate a right where it did not previously exist? Would the original claimants be non-suited at the bar of reason because the thing stolen from them had changed hands? Certainly not. And if one act of transfer can give no title, can many? No; though *nothing* be multiplied for ever it will not produce *one*. Even the law recognises this principle. An existing holder must, if called upon, substantiate the claims of those from whom he purchased or inherited his property; and any flaw in the original parchment, even though the property should have had a score of intermediate owners, quashes his right [of course *without* compensation].

What possible congruity, what possible effect can Mr. Spencer's plea for compensation have after this? There is much more to the same effect, which I only forbear to quote out of consideration for your space, but which I hope some of your readers, at least, will look up for themselves in the "original edition" to which Mr. Spencer refers them.

If nothing will satisfy Mr. Spencer but the publication of the famous Chapter IX. in full, we shall have to enlarge our leaflet so as to admit Section 4 in which he disposes of the squatter's claim to "own" land founded upon its reclamation from the wilderness; his defence of the equal rights of future generations to the use of the earth (Section 5); his bitter denunciation of those who palter with the truth of the principle that all men have equal rights to the use of the earth—as he is doing now (Section 6); his argument from the fact that even the existing law does not recognise estates "as the inalienable possessions of their nominal owners" and that the "right of private possession" is "no right at all."

But Mr. Spencer wishes us to add also—

That though in 1850, I had assumed that, after making such compensation, there would be a balance of benefit to the community, I had in the intervening forty odd years come to the conclusion that the transaction equitably carried out, would entail more loss than gain, and that therefore it would be better that the present arrangement should continue.

And he appears to believe that this addendum would destroy the value of the leaflet to the League. Does he not know that the League is not, and never has been in favour of compensation to landlords? That holding, as he did in 1850, that "to deprive others of their rights to the use of the earth is to commit a crime inferior only in wickedness to the crime of taking away their lives or personal liberties," we should no more think of compensating landlords, when the rights of the people are once more reasserted by law, than we should think of compensating pirates or garrotters for the legal suppression of *their* crimes. Does not Mr. Spencer see how greatly the position of the anti-compensationists is strengthened by the public confession of the great apostle of land-nationalisation-by-compensation that, although "Equity sternly demands it to be done," it cannot be done by the compensation method without inflicting immense loss and consequent injustice. A method which fines the people for the restoration of their long-stolen rights is impossible of defence. Mr. Spencer's magnificent argument for "the resumption of the land by the community" remains unweakened by his latter changes of opinion: he has only succeeded in strengthening it by admitting the unworkability of a proposal unnecessary to, and altogether inconsistent with, his main argument.

I have no right to pledge my Executive without consulting them; but if Mr. Spencer will give us an undertaking that no difficulties shall be raised in respect of copyright, I will ask my Executive to reprint the famous Chapter IX. verbatim, compensation paragraph and all, adding in his own words of this morning a statement as to his change of opinion on the compensation question. It is not the League that will lose in influence by such a republication.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

FREDK. VERINDER.

V.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 27th.*

SIR,—My purpose was not to answer any one's letter, but simply to show that the leaflet circulated by the English Land Restoration League gravely misrepresents the facts. This I did beyond all question. It gives, and was manifestly intended to give, the impression that I hold the same views that are held by the League, which I did not do even in 1850, and still less do now.

The League are perfectly welcome to publish the whole of Chapter IX. of "Social Statics," provided always that they publish along with it such passages from "Justice" as I point out, giving my reasons for the change of view which has occurred.

Mr. John Wheelwright, who charges me with ignorance of the law, simply shows his own ignorance of my books. If he had taken the trouble to learn something about the matter he would have found that I have repeatedly referred to the fact, that in legal theory landowners are tenants of the Crown (which means in our times the community), and that in practice every railway Act, or kindred Act, assumes this by giving State authority to take possession of lands after making compensation. This has been one of my arguments in support of the contention, that the land (though not the value given by cultivation) belongs inalienably to the community—a doctrine which I held originally, and hold still.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,
HERBERT SPENCER.

VI.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 28th.*

SIR,—My Executive met this evening. They gladly and unanimously accepted Mr. Herbert Spencer's proposition published by you this morning. If Mr. Spencer will send, for publication in your columns, the extracts from "Justice" which he wishes us to include, together with the reprint of Chapter IX. of "Social Statics," in our new pamphlet, my Executive will make arrangements for the publication of the whole controversy with as little delay as possible. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

(On behalf of the Executive),
August 27th. FREDK. VERINDER, *Gen. Sec. E.L.R.L.*

VII.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 29th.*

SIR,—I have some experience of controversy. It is endless and always futile—gets lost in ever-multiplying side issues. I am old and an invalid, and decline to enter the lists with your various correspondents.

I did not propose to publish in your columns the extracts from "Justice." They would simply be texts for more controversy. If along with Chapter IX. of "Social Statics," the League will publish them in such wise that they are equally conspicuous and cannot be separated, I waive copyright.

Though the change in my view practically concerns only the impolicy of nationalisation after compensation, I may add here that it has changed in a further respect. As I have pointed out in "The Principles of Ethics," there is at present for us no such thing as *absolute right*, but only *least wrong*. In our transitional state all things are wrong, and only in the slow progress of things approach nearer to right. My argument in "Social Statics" was based upon the untenable assumption that the existing English community had a *moral* right to the land. They never had anything of the kind. They were robbers all round: Normans robbed Danes and Saxons, Saxons robbed Celts, Celts robbed the aborigines, traces of whose earth-houses we find here

and there. Let the English Land Restoration League find the descendants of these last, and restore the land to them. There never was any equity in the matter, and re-establishment of a supposed original equity is a dream. The stronger peoples have been land-thieves from the beginning, and have remained land-thieves down to the present hour.

All changes of social arrangements have to be made with a view to the *least injustice*. Every change involves inflicting evils somewhere, and while our changes must always be in the direction of an ideal equity, they have to be made with a view to the minimum of proximate evil.

I daresay this letter will be a text for no end of arguments; but I cannot spend my small remaining energies in taking notice of them.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,
August 28th. HERBERT SPENCER.

VIII.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *August 30th.*

SIR,—I thought I had already made it clear that the Executive of the English Land Restoration League had unreservedly accepted Mr. Spencer's proposition—or shall I call it "challenge?"—published in your Monday's paper. He has now for the third time varied the wording of his challenge. That there may be no mistake about it, I am willing to adopt his own words of this morning, and to undertake on behalf of my Executive that with the reprint of "Social Statics" (Chapter IX.) we will print the extracts from "Justice" "in such wise that they are equally conspicuous, and cannot be separated." I assume, of course, that the word "separated" is used in its physical sense, implying that the whole shall appear in one and the same pamphlet, so that they cannot be separated without destroying the pamphlet. The mental and moral "separation" between the teachings of "Social Statics" and Mr. Spencer's present teachings is too obvious to be concealed, is admitted by Mr. Spencer and his friends, and is once more painfully emphasised by Mr. Spencer's extraordinary utterance of this morning. That the eloquent defender of "the *right of mankind at large* to the earth's surface" should invite us to find the descendants of the pre-Celtic aborigines of these islands, and "restore the land to them," would seem but a sorry jest even if Mr. Spencer had never written Section 5 of Chapter IX. of "Social Statics."

My Executive suggested the publication in your columns of the answer of the Herbert Spencer of 1894 to the Herbert Spencer of 1850, because they thought that such a course would be convenient to your readers, and would serve the interests of a thorough discussion. But as Mr. Spencer is unwilling to submit the reasons for his recantation to your readers' criticism, it will be sufficient for the purpose of the proposed republication if he will be good enough to forward the extracts to the office of the League at his earliest convenience.

I am, Sir, &c.
FREDK. VERINDER, *Gen. Sec. E.L.R.L.*

IX.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *September 1st*, 1894.

SIR,—I wrote my last letter in a hurry to save post, and must send a few lines, not in reply to anyone, but in explanation of my meaning.

I said that my argument in "Social Statics" had been "based upon the untenable assumption that the existing English community had a *moral* right to the land." My statement should rather have been that in "Social Statics"

I had wrongly supposed that the right of the English community was of the same nature as the theoretical right which I was there setting forth. My argument assumed that a group of men had, in some way not specified, come peaceably into possession of some previously unoccupied tract of territory; and I proceeded to discuss the relations between the individual and the group, with a view to deciding what were their respective rights in relation to the soil. But if some adverse critic, after describing how our ancestors had come into possession by slaying some men, enslaving others, and driving the rest away, had asked me how my supposition was applicable to the facts as they actually occurred, I should have been puzzled to answer. Or if he had asked why, not having condemned the forcible appropriation by one people of another people's land, I condemned the forcible appropriation by some of the conquerors of the land seized by the whole body of them, I do not see what satisfactory answer I could have given. Or, once more, if, referring to my contention that a landowner's title, originally inequitable, could not be made equitable by lapse of time, he had asked me how in that case the inequitable title of the whole community could have become equitable in course of time, there would have been no adequate reply. Hence on reconsideration, it seems to me that such part of the argument in 'Social Statics" as sets out from an ideal case and draws inferences, is not applicable to the real case (as it occurred among ourselves); and that the real case, or at any rate our case, cannot be dealt with as a part of abstract ethics.

The question how long it takes for a moral claim to grow out of immoral transactions does not here concern me. Probably if the French were successfully to invade us and take possession of our lands we should say that their right could never become a moral one. But on the principle that custom eventually becomes law, and that long usage eventually establishes right, it may not unfairly be contended that ethically also a moral right of the community has been established—at any rate it is convenient to assume this. But here comes in the difference I have referred to between the absolutely right and the relatively right or least wrong; and my present belief is that an argument which assumed circumstances that did not exist led to conclusions which were inapplicable to the circumstances that did exist.

But any scepticism as to how a moral right can be deduced from the right of conquest affects landowners just as much as non-landowners, and simply leaves the question to be settled between them on other grounds.

To exclude another misapprehension which I see may arise, let me add that when I said "The stronger peoples have been land-thieves from the beginning, and have remained land-thieves down to the present hour," I referred to the fact that the stronger peoples are still forcibly appropriating the lands of the weaker peoples all over the world, just in the way their forefathers did, only more actively and on larger scales.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,
HERBERT SPENCER.

Cliftonville, Margate, *August 31st.*

X.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *September 5th*, 1894.

Mr. Herbert Spencer writes from Cliftonville, Margate, under date September 3rd, to the General Secretary of the English Land Restoration League, as follows:—

I have not my books here, and the matter of the extracts from "Justice" must stand over until my return to town, which may be some weeks hence.—H.S.

XI.

[Envelope marked "Private."]
64, Avenue-road, Regent's-park, N.W.,
September 19th.

SIR,—I have returned home, and am now able to let you have the extracts from my work "Justice," which are to be reproduced along with Chapter IX. of "Social Statics," if you wish to circulate that chapter. In fulfilment of the proviso I named, the following arrangements must be made:—

1. The extracts must be intercalated in the chapter in such places that they come after those paragraphs to which they more especially refer. These places I will indicate by numbers corresponding with those on the extracts.

2. These intercalated extracts are to be marked off by square brackets to distinguish them from the text of the chapter, but are to be in the same type.

3. The chapter, with these intercalated extracts, is to be issued on a broad sheet printed on both sides, and nothing else is to be printed on this sheet or attached to it.

4. The chapter and its additions are not to be issued or otherwise used in any other form than the form thus prescribed.

5. I must receive from the chairman of the League a signed acceptance of these conditions, joined with the specified understanding that should there be a breach of them, or any of them, I shall at once withdraw my permission, reassert copyright, and apply for an injunction to restrain all use of it either by sale or gratis distribution.

6. Along with this declaration signed by the chairman there must be sent to me a proof of the sheet in the form in which it is to be issued as specified above.

7. After having seen that this proof fulfils the conditions herein named, I will give my written assent to the use of it by the English Land Restoration League for sale or distribution.

It appears from the extracts you have made that you or the League possess a copy of "Social Statics." If on some morning previously named, between eleven and one o'clock, you will bring that copy, I will hand you the extracts and my secretary will mark the places at which they are to be inserted.

I am, yours, &c.
HERBERT SPENCER.

The Secretary,
English Land Restoration League.

XII.

8, Duke-street, Adelphi, *September 20th*, 1894.

HERBERT SPENCER, ESQ.

SIR,—As your letter of yesterday's date, to hand this morning, and I am surprised to note marked "Private," seems to me materially to vary the terms of the offer or challenge which you publicly made in the columns of *The Daily Chronicle*, and which we as publicly accepted, I must ask you to excuse a definite reply to it, until I have had an opportunity of laying it before my committee, which I will do at their next meeting. I may at once say, however, that as the League has not, and never has had, any "chairman," or president, it will be impossible for us to comply, in any case, with your fifth paragraph, as it now stands.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
FREDK. VERINDER, *General Secretary.*

XIII.

64, Avenue-road, Regent's-park, N.W.,
September 24th, 1894.

SIR,—In your letter of the 20th inst., you say that "the League has not, nor ever has had, any chairman or president." The printed heading of your letter gives your own name, and that of the honorary treasurer, but does not give the names of any committee or council. Will you please send me some printed document which contains the names of those who constitute the body you call "my executive."

I am, yours, &c.,
HERBERT SPENCER.

The Secretary,
English Land Restoration League.

XIV.

HERBERT SPENCER, ESQ. *September 24th.*

SIR,—In reply to your letter of this morning's date, I beg to forward herewith copies of our two last reports—viz., the annual report for the year ending May, 1894, and the Special Red Van Report, issued earlier in the year. On the first page of the former you will find the names of the present members of our executive.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
FREDK. VERINDER.

XV.

8, Duke-street, Adelphi, *September 29th.*

HERBERT SPENCER, ESQ.

SIR,—I have now had an opportunity of laying your letter of the 19th inst. before the executive of the League. I am directed to say that the executive cannot admit your right to insist upon other conditions than those already laid down in the public correspondence, and to request you to be good enough to forward the extracts from "Justice" therein referred to. My executive must decline to recognise as "private" any letter with reference to the conditions of an offer publicly made and publicly accepted.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
FREDK. VERINDER, *General Secretary*, E.L.R.L.

XVI.

64, Avenue-road, *September 26th*, 1894.

SIR,—That which has happened is just that which I knew must happen. I knew that it would never answer the purpose of the League to circulate, along with Chapter IX. of "Social Statics," the relevant extracts from "Justice," "in such wise that they are equally conspicuous, and cannot be separated." The result would be, not help to their cause but, hindrance of it.

The mode of printing I prescribed is simply such as ensures inseparableness and equal conspicuousness. If the committee honestly wish to fulfil my requirements I do not see what ground for objection they have. The extracts from "Justice," if not intercalated, must be either prefixed or affixed. Your committee can scarcely intend to prefix them, for that would render them *more* conspicuous, and if they were affixed they would be *less* conspicuous and would be easily separable.

Am I to trust that your executive will fairly fulfil my conditions? Well, considering my experience of its proceedings, I do not see how I can with

any prudence do this. It has circulated a leaflet which, professing to be a statement of my view on the land question, omits the all-important view that landlords should be compensated; and it has circulated this leaflet without saying that, though forty odd years ago I thought that resumption of direct ownership by the State, after making compensation to landlords, would be a gain to the community, I now think that it would entail a loss. And your executive expects that after it has thus doubly misrepresented my views I may appropriately leave it to deal with the extracts from "Justice" as it thinks well.

Your committee requests me "to be good enough to forward the extracts from 'Justice.'" You will receive these extracts only in the manner, and on the conditions, prescribed in my letter of the 19th inst.

Your statement that my note of the 20th was marked "Private" surprised me, as the fact appears to have surprised you; for I did not remember having dictated any such heading. On inquiry it turned out that the word "Private" had been written on the envelope by my secretary, who well knew that I should be averse to making the matter a public one, unless there should be occasion. As it now appears from the last paragraph of your last letter that your executive propose to make the matter a public one, I prefer myself to send the correspondence to *The Daily Chronicle*.

I am, yours, &c.,
HERBERT SPENCER.

The Secretary,
English Land Restoration League.

[The letters numbered XI., XII., XV., and XVI. accordingly appeared in *The Daily Chronicle* of September 27th.]

XVII.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *October 5th*, 1894.

SIR,—Now that Mr. Spencer's tactics are no longer concealed behind envelopes which his secretary marks "private," the public may readily judge between him and us, and rightly apportion the blame for any delay which has occurred in publishing the extracts from "Social Statics" and from "Justice."

Many readers of the *Chronicle* will no doubt have forgotten the details of the correspondence which took place a few weeks ago. Even you, Sir, seem to think that the Land Restoration League is in some way trying to evade the publication of a full statement of Mr. Spencer's opinions. Nothing of the sort is the case.

As long ago as August 25th, I offered in your columns to ask my executive "to reprint the famous Chapter IX. verbatim, compensation paragraph and all, adding in Mr. Spencer's words of this morning, a statement as to his change of opinion on the compensation question."

Mr. Spencer replied to this (*D. C.*, August 27th):—

"The League are perfectly welcome to publish the whole of Chapter IX. of 'Social Statics,' provided always that they publish along with it such passages from 'Justice' as I point out, giving my reasons for the change of view which has occurred."

My executive met the same evening, and (*D. C.*, August 28th) "gladly and unanimously accepted the challenge," and asked Mr. Spencer to send the extracts from "Justice" for publication in your columns.

Mr. Spencer's reply (*D. C.*, August 29th) varied the wording of his challenge:—"I do not propose to publish in your columns the extracts from 'Justice.' They would simply be texts for more controversy. If along with Chapter IX. of 'Social Statics' the League will publish them in such wise that they are equally conspicuous and cannot be separated, I waive copyright."

I immediately, on behalf our executive, accepted Mr. Spencer's new proviso, and, in order that there should be no mistake about the matter, quoted and adopted Mr. Spencer's own words. (*D. C.*, August 30th.)

Nothing could have been more straightforward or complete than the way in which the League publicly accepted every challenge which Mr. Spencer publicly threw out.

But the simple proviso of August 29th, openly set out in your columns, is expanded in the letter which Mr. Spencer's secretary ("Knowing," as he says, "that I should be averse to make the matter a public one unless there should be occasion") marked "private," into seven very carefully-worded conditions. We are to print the extracts from Mr. Spencer's books in the most unwieldy form that could be devised, and the one least likely to be read—"on a broad sheet printed on both sides." The same Mr. Spencer who complained that we had not dealt fairly with his arguments, now makes the astounding proposal that we should break up the consecutive and closely reasoned argument of "Social Statics" by inserting between its paragraphs detached extracts from another book published many years later. And, after being informed that the League has not, and never has had, any chairman or president, he still says that he will only redeem his promise to send the extracts from "Justice," "on the conditions prescribed in" his "letter of the 19th inst."—one of which conditions is that the *chairman* of the League shall give a certain written undertaking! and another of his "conditions" would actually prevent us from printing on this precious "broad-sheet," even the name and address of the League as publishers.

We are more than anxious to abide by our publicly-given pledge in the spirit and in the letter.

We are prepared to print in parallel columns, and in the same type, the whole of Chapter IX. of "Social Statics," and of such extracts from "Justice" as Mr Spencer deems necessary. We will head each column with the name and date of the book from which it is quoted, placing each extract from "Justice" opposite to such paragraph from "Social Statics" as Mr. Spencer may indicate. This will secure that the whole argument of "Social Statics" may be read consecutively, while the extracts from "Justice" will be printed, as Mr. Spencer wishes, "in such wise that they are equally conspicuous and cannot be separated."

As Mr. Spencer claims to have substantiated his charge, which gave rise to the recent correspondence in your columns, that the League had "garbled" and "falsified" his opinions, he can hardly object to the publication of the whole correspondence, viz., all his letters and all mine—as an introduction to, and explanation of, the re-publication of the extracts. We will print the correspondence, Chapter IX. of "Social Statics," and the extracts from "Justice," in a demy 8vo pamphlet, uniform with our other publications—far more easily handled and read than the preposterous "broad-sheet" which he suggests. Myself, or some other officer of the League, will give a written undertaking that these conditions shall be faithfully observed, and that the extracts shall be issued in the form agreed upon, and in no other.

I submit to you, Sir, and to your readers, that what I now offer on behalf of my executive is in exact agreement, in the letter and in the spirit, with the offer publicly made by Mr. Spencer and publicly accepted by us. They concede every point in Mr. Spencer's letter of the 19th inst., upon which he could fairly insist without taking away with one hand what he professes to give with the other.

FREDK. VERINDER. *General Secretary*, E.L.R.L.

Offices of the English Land Restoration League,
8, Duke-street, Adelphi, W.C., *September 27th.*

XVIII.

64, Avenue-road, Regent's-park, N.W.,
October 8th, 1894.

SIR,—A pamphlet, in parallel columns, with the contents arranged as described by you in your letter to *The Daily Chronicle*, will insure inseparableness and equal conspicuousness, and I do not object to it. But a proof must be sent to me, that I may see that the arrangement described is fairly carried out. And it will also be needful that your copy of "Social Statics" shall be brought here to have the places of collateral insertion of the extracts from "Justice" marked.

According to your account of it, the Land Restoration League is a headless body; and entering upon transactions with a body that has no responsible representative seems a course of doubtful prudence, especially as my experience of the League's doings does not inspire me with unlimited confidence. You offer me your own undertaking or that of "some other officer of the League." How does your undertaking bind the League, which is an unincorporated body? And what becomes of your undertaking if you are directed to do something at variance with it? Will you resign? And if you resign (or if you are deposed) what will become of your undertaking? Nevertheless, as I do not wish to be charged with indirectly withdrawing the permission I originally gave, I will agree to the proposed arrangement if I receive an undertaking signed by three members of your executive.

I assent to nothing more than I have already assented to. If you wish to circulate my opinions on the land question you must circulate them by themselves. I cannot allow attention to be distracted from the main issues by adding minor issues. This restriction must be specified in the undertaking.

I am, yours, &c.,
HERBERT SPENCER,

The General Secretary,
English Land Restoration League.

XIX.—*From the* DAILY CHRONICLE, *October 22nd*, 1894.

SIR,—I shall be obliged if you will kindly insert the following letter which has been sent to Mr. Spencer, in reply to the communication which appears in your columns this morning.

Now that Mr. Spencer has withdrawn the restrictions against which we felt bound to protest, we shall issue the extracts from his two books as soon as possible after the receipt of the selections from "Justice" and the correction of the proofs.

Yours faithfully,
FREDK. VERINDER, *General Secretary*, E.L.R.L.

8, Duke-street, Adelphi, *October 11th.*

"8, Duke-street, Adelphi, London, W.C.,
"*October 9th.*

"HERBERT SPENCER, ESQ.

"SIR,—The copy from which I made my quotations from 'Social Statics' is in the British Museum.

"I am directed by my executive to say in reply to your letter of yesterday:—

"They are prepared to reprint the extracts from your two books in parallel columns, as stated by me on their behalf in *The Daily Chronicle*, and accepted by you in your letter on the 8th inst.

"They will send you a proof of the single-column reprint of the ninth chapter of 'Social Statics,' upon which they will ask you to be good enough to indicate the passages you wish to be reprinted from 'Justice,' and to mark the sections of 'Social Statics' against which you wish them to be placed.

"They will then add the extracts from 'Justice,' and send you a paged proof of the pamphlet containing the whole of the extracts, in parallel columns, in the exact form in which it is proposed that that pamphlet should be issued to the public.

"Three members of the executive will be appointed by resolution of the executive to give an undertaking that the pamphlet shall be issued in the form of the paged proof thus submitted to you, and in no other form.

"The title of the pamphlet will be 'Mr. Herbert Spencer on the Land Question.'

"I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

"FREDK. VERINDER."

[The signed proof of the reprinted extracts, dated Nov. 30th, was received from Mr. Spencer on Dec. 1st, 1894, and the pamphlet was at once put to press. (*Land Restoration Tract, No.* 2, "Mr. Herbert Spencer on the Land Question," price one penny.)

The extracts from "Justice," selected by Mr. Spencer, have been printed side by side with the argument from "Social Statics." In the forty years which intervened between the publication of the two books, Mr. Spencer undoubtedly changed his opinions, but his original argument—which the League used, not because Mr. Spencer wrote it, but because he *proved* it—remains unanswered and unanswerable. A quibble about restoring the land to the pre-Celtic "peoples who dwelt in underground houses", and a dissertation on prairie value, helped out by a long quotation from Mr. Mackay on Poor Law Statistics, are all that Mr. Spencer can find, even in "Justice," to set against his earlier plea for "The Right to the Use of the Earth."

As a sufficient answer to the unfounded charges brought against the League and its executive by Mr. Spencer, the whole correspondence is reprinted above *verbatim*. The leaflet-summary, to which Mr. Spencer objected, is now withdrawn from circulation. The new pamphlet, which—now that difficulties of copyright no longer stand in the way—has taken its place, is a far more powerful controversial weapon in the hands of land restorers.

For the rest, all that Mr. Spencer has ever published on the Land Question is reprinted and examined in Mr. Henry George's "A Perplexed Philosopher," a book which all who are further interested in the controversy are recommended to read.

THE EXECUTIVE OF THE ENGLISH LAND RESTORATION LEAGUE.]

PAGE & PRATT, Limited, Printers, 5, 6 & 7 Ludgate Circus Buildings, London, E.C.

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